



As reprinted from 11/24/2008

Treasurer hopes to inspire Horizon students

Seniors at Horizon High School in northeast Phoenix will learn real-life finance and economics lessons when Arizona Treasurer Dean Martin visits their school next week.

Martin, 34, who was valedictorian at the school in 1992, said he hopes the visit will help teens value what they're learning.

"The greatest risk in our nation is graduating students who are not financially literate," Martin said. "We're seeing how mistakes by people who are supposed to know what they are doing are affecting the country. The one thing our education system is lacking is applied economics and financial planning."

Martin said he anticipates that the students will ask about how to pay for college or a car. They'll likely also ask about running a campaign and his responsibilities managing and investing the state's revenue.

"They're very sophisticated students, they've developed their own opinions, so these aren't softball questions," Martin said. "I'm looking forward to this visit. Last year I was talking about a recession coming, but the rest of the public wasn't. Now everyone is talking about it. I'm curious to see their perspective."

Martin is a big proponent of greater math and financial literacy in education and demystifying paychecks, checking accounts, mortgage loans, credit and credit ratings.

"The best way to fight poverty is education so people know how make money and save money," Martin said. "That's the most important thing we can do. No amount of regulation can do as well as people knowing what's right, being able to evaluate something and know when someone is trying to take them for a ride."

Martin also wants to encourage civic involvement by voting, calling legislator or running for office. Elected in 2006, Martin is up for re-election in 2010.

"You don't have to wait 30, 40 year to make a difference," said Martin.

Sadie Jo Smokey, The Arizona Republic